(c) in what way will Government bring about equity and fairness in International trade policies to help farmers of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir; and

(d) the steps proposed to reduce such aspects of FTAs which harm Indian farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) The Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration of December, 2005 under the Doha Round negotiations of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), has recognized the right of developing country Members of self designate an appropriate number of tariff lines as Special Products (SPs) guided by indicators based on the criteria of food security, livelihood security and rural development. It would be the endeavour of the Government to ensure that the resultant negotiated modalities permit designation of products such as apples as Special Products with more flexible tariff reduction commitments as compared to other products.

(b) to (d) No Sir, the interest of Indian farmers are protected by keeping all items that are sensitive for tariff liberalization in the Exclusion or Negative List of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). No tariff concessions are offered on these sensitive tariff lines with adequate care taken for protection of the domestic industry including that of farmers. Apples have been included in the Negative list of the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) and the India-Singapore Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA).

Import of foreign equipments for SEZs

1652. SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry plans to allow Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to import foreign made equipments to be used in the factories;

(b) whether employees from foreign lands will also be allowed to work in SEZs; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) Provisions exist in the Special Economic Zones Act, 2005 and SEZ Rules, 2006, for imports for carrying out authorized operations as admissible. There is no bar in the SEZ Act and Rules for employing foreigners subject to the existing domestic legislation governing visa regime for this purpose.

Increased demand for artifacts

1653. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a sudden increase in demand by NRIs for Indian artifacts in foreign countries like USA; and

(b) if so, the details of export of artifacts in the last two years and so far, during the current financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) The exports of works

of art, collectors pieces and antiques is valued at Rs. 2026.09 crore in 2005-06, Rs. 1951.71 crore in 2006-07 and Rs. 124.83 crore in April, 07. This does not indicate any sudden increase in demand of artifacts in foreign countries.

Introduction of Integrated Food Law

1654. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that our exports have touched a record of Rs. 4,40,000 crores in 2005-06;

(b) whether Government is likely to introduce an Integrated Food Law to help in meeting requirements of International trade and make Indian farm products globally competitive and whether the Government is bringing out a Legislation to set up a single line of command from the present multilevel control;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the details of various steps; already taken, specially in the agricultural and food processing field to produce standard export oriented quality to meet International standards?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Yes Sir. The total exports of the year 2005-06 were Rs. 4,56,417.88 crores. The agriculture and allied product exports were Rs. 31,960.37 crores during 2005-06.

(b) to (d) The Food Safety and Standards Act 2006 has been enacted to consolidate the laws relating to food and to establish the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India for laying down science based standards for food and food products and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import etc. The objective is to reduce multiplicity of authority and to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. India is also a member of Codex Alimentarius Commission, an international body created by FAO & WHO to develop food standards, guidelines and related issues such as code of practices etc., to ensure food safety in agriculture exports and ensure fair trade practices in the food trade.

Steps to provide stability to trade

1655. DR. V. MAITREYAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the trade deficit is increasing due to heavy import bills;

(b) if so, the present level of trade deficit during the current financial year;

(c) what steps are being taken by the Government to provide stability to trade both inland and overseas; and

(d) what are the imported items which have an adverse effect on trade in India and the steps taken to contain such imports to protect the local industry?